Visualizing Sensuous Suffering and Affective Pain in Early Modern Europe and the Spanish Americas

Edited by

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CHAPTER 7

Hagiographical Misery and the Liminal Witness: Novohispanic Franciscan Martyr Portraits and the Politics of Imperial Expansion

Emmanuel Ortega

In *Chronica apostólica y seráfica de todos los colegios de propaganda fide* (1746), friar Isidro Félix de Espinosa recounts how the Franciscan friar Francisco Casañas de Jesús left Zacatecas in 1693 and said goodbye to his friends and benefactors with such delight that everybody felt surprised by the happiness in his face…. "Brothers, he said, "do not forget about me in your prayers as I am headed out to be killed by the indians."[1]

The saga of friar Casañas, and other Novohispanic Franciscan martyrs of the seventeenth century, survives in visual form through many eighteenth-century portraits. These depictions, ranging from the twenty-six martyrs of Japan (martyred on 5 February 1597) and San Felipe de Jesús (1572–1597) to the twenty-one Franciscan victims of the Pueblo Revolution of 1680 and the massacre at the Mission of San Sabá, Texas, of 1758, were painted in the Spanish viceroyalty of New Spain in what is today central Mexico. They hung as components of altarpieces in countless churches, and especially within Franciscan collections in colleges and monasteries, on the walls of galleries adorned with portraits of exemplary Franciscans, as can be viewed in the portrait gallery currently occupying the walls of a narrow corridor within the Museo de Guadalupe in Zacatecas (originally established as a College of Propaganda Fide in 1707) (Fig. 7.1).

Diego Sanabria's *Fray Francisco Casañas de Jesus*, painted in the middle of the eighteenth century, is a prime example of what I call Franciscan hagiographic portraiture. The painting possesses numerous characteristics common among

1 Isidro Félix de Espinosa (and Juan Domingo Arricivita), *Chronica apostolica y seraphica de todos los colegios de Propaganda Fide de esta Nueva-España, de missioneros franciscanos observantes: erigidos con autoridad pontificia y regia para la reformacion de los fieles y conversion de los gentiles* (Mexico City: la viuda de don J. B. de Hogal, 1746). The original text reads as follows: "Salio a esta ciudad a despedirse de sus amigos, y bienhechores con tanto regocijo, que todos extrañaban la alegría de su semblante…. Hermanos, no se olviden de mi en sus oraciones que voy a que me maten los indios." See also Isidro Félix de Espinosa, *Chronica apostólica y seraphica de todos los colegios de propaganda fide de: erigidos con,…* (New York: Gale Ecco, Sabin Americana, 2012), 283.

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FIGURE 7.1
Franciscan portrait gallery, Museo de Guadalupe Zacatecas, ex-College of Propaganda Fide of Guadalupe, Zacatecas, Mexico. PHOTOGRAPH BY EMMANUEL ORTEGA.

works portraying the martyrdom of various Franciscans who perished as witnesses to their faith in the Spanish American viceroyalties (Fig. 7.2). Friar Casañas kneels in the foreground, occupying most of the picture plane. His calm eyes are raised towards the large wooden cross he grasps as a half-naked Native who stands behind him swings a *macana* (wooden club with obsidian blades) towards him. Casañas's expression is stoic despite his suffering. The wounds and dripping blood visible on top of the friar's head signal the pain he experiences, and these signs are intended to solicit empathy from the observer. In the middleground, a distant scene depicts him being assailed by a pair of Natives as he kneels before a large cross. A biographical inscription on the bottom details the basics of who and what appears in the scene.

In this essay, I examine three eighteenth-century hagiographic martyr portraits anchored to the Franciscan missionary history of New Mexico including Sanabria's *Fray Francisco Casañas de Jesus*, as well as two works of unknown authorship: *Fray Francisco de Arvide,* who Zuni Natives killed in 1632 by sinking a machete into his skull (Fig. 7.3), and the *Virgen de la Macana*, showing the twenty-one martyrs of the 1680 New Mexican Pueblo Revolution depicted in a battle in the composition (Fig. 7.4). The three works were all found in the portrait galleries of monastic spaces such as the Colleges of Propaganda Fide where novices studied for several years in preparation for their lives as missionaries.[2] These establishments, first founded in Rome by Pope Gregory XV

2 In these colleges, novices were required to study philosophy and theology for six years and moral theology for two years. As Galindo notes, "intellectual brainstorming was a daily activity in the colleges for the propagation of the faith. Concerns with the qualifications of the future missionaries started after the novitiate. Students gathered with other friars, including veteran missionaries, to discuss evangelical subjects in daily conferences to problematize

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FIGURE 7.2 *Diego Sanabria*, Retrato de Fray Francisco Casañas de Jesus, *mid-eighteenth century. Oil on canvas. Reproduction authorized by the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia* (INAH).

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in 1622 and later established in New Spain in 1683, three years after the Pueblo Revolution, promoted missionary expansion into the northern and southern provinces of the viceroyalty where many of these martyrdoms occurred.[3]

The portraits considered here illustrate scenes in which Novohispanic missionaries' bodies transcend their earthly existence to the realm of holy martyrs. The martyrs' bodies are presented with visible wounds that highlight their willing endurance of physical pain and emotional suffering, while rebellious Pueblo Natives perform as secondary characters and necessary instruments to the processes of martyrdom. Paintings like these provided valuable models, particularly for Franciscan novices who, as part of their training, had to learn to embrace the reality that they might very well meet the same fate as those shown dying for their faith. The suffering that Novohispanic Franciscan martyrs, like Casañas, underwent at the hands of heathen *indios* was theologically justified as a necessary link between the martyr, Christ, and the order's patron saint; indeed, it even enabled a corporeal empathy with the agony of Christ's Passion denied by Francis's own painless stigmata. Beyond this didactic role, the portraits also reveal more complex, multivalent functions that demonstrate their intimate connection with the goals and identity of the Franciscan order, the complexities involved in Spanish colonization, hagiographic literature that provided source material for these violent images, and shifts within the politico-religious landscape that sought to marginalize mendicants working and dying on the northern frontier.

To explore the multiple meanings and propagandistic messages of these hagiographic martyr images, I unpack them in several stages. To begin, I posit that these portraits highlight two distinct types of liminality experienced by the Novohispanic Franciscans, as mendicant friars trying to live outside of mainstream culture (which I call Franciscan liminality) and as missionaries serving on the fringes of the Spanish empire. In this second capacity (which I call colonial liminality), Franciscans had to negotiate simultaneously operating as supporters of imperial expansion and in resistance to attempts to dismantle (or at least downplay) their missionizing efforts.[4] This conflict is one inherent

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the missionary enterprise." David Rex Galindo, "Propaganda Fide Training Franciscan Missionaries in New Spain" (PhD diss., Southern Methodist University, 2012), 374.

3 For more on these portrait galleries, see Pedro Ángeles Jiménez, "Imágenes y memoria, la pintura de retrato de los franciscanos de la Nueva España" (PhD diss., UNAM, 2010), 208–244.

4 The missionary project was always central to colonization. At the same time, Franciscan values were always at stake as they actively participated in the violence of epistemological conquest and the subsequent punitive actions that the rejection of new European forms of knowledge entailed.

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EIV.e P.F Martin de Aruide. Nat.l de la Ciu.d de S.t Sebast.n en la Cantabria: Profesſo enel Conv.o
de Mex.co y en premio de ſus virtudes, consiguio dar gloriosam.te en martirio la vida por N. Redē
plor enel nuevo Mex.co en 27 de febrero de 1632 a.s

FIGURE 7.3 *Unknown artist,* Fray Francisco de Arvide, *mid-eighteenth century. Oil on canvas. Church of San Francisco, Puebla, Mexico. Reproduction authorized by the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia* (INAH).
PHOTOGRAPH BY EMMANUEL ORTEGA.

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FIGURE 7.4 *Unknown artist*, Virgen de la Macana, *mid-to-late eighteenth century. Oil on canvas.* COURTESY OF THE NEW MEXICO HISTORY MUSEUM. PHOTOGRAPH BY BLAIR CLARK.

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to Franciscanism itself: how does one renounce the world, only to preach and evangelize within it? St. Francis answered this by having his followers take vows of extreme poverty; on the Novohispanic frontier, some Franciscans answered it through martyrdom.

After consideration of these different types of liminalities and the Spanish colonial missionizing program, I describe how certain beholders — in this case Franciscan novices — transformed into mystical witnesses when observing these martyrological portraits. I then consider why artists consciously chose to use hagiographic texts that foregrounded violent narratives over other types of written sources to create the subjects of these paintings. Another point of entry into the complex associations that these images recalled is consideration of the roles Natives played within them. All of these factors — oscillating between two liminalities, novices as witnesses, violent hagiographic narratives as sources, and the roles of Natives — are framed within the context of the eighteenth-century Bourbon Reforms in the final section.

Franciscan vs. Colonial Liminality, and the Complicated Dynamics of Spanish Colonization

Liminality is a term from cultural anthropology that describes the state in which designated members of a cultural group find themselves during a period of transition. Anthropologist Victor Turner defines liminal subjects as those that are "neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention and ceremonial."[5] By adopting doctrines of poverty, mendicant leaders such as Benedict (c. 480–543), Francis (1181/82–1226), and Dominic (1170–1221) established their orders as liminal efforts to protest the lavishness of the Church, perpetually occupying a transitory space between the worlds of flesh and spirit. The ideals of these medieval groups, which were centered on material dispossession, served as inspiration for Turner's own definitions of liminality.[6] His ideas developed as a way to ex-

5 Victor W. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1995), 93. He further links a state of liminality to invisibility, darkness, and the wilderness. See also Victor Turner and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (New York: Columbia UP, 1978), 249. Liminal beings are recognized as possessing an authority removed from social structure and occupying a homogeneous state brought on by discipline and tribulation.

6 Arnold van Gennep first introduced the concept of liminality in *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).

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plain the characteristics of different religious groups, more specifically, the followers of Francis of Assisi, who, unlike other non-mendicant religious orders, did not live in isolated monasticism but engaged directly in society as preachers and evangelists. The dangers and uncertainty that lurked outside the protection of the cloister walls, and, more specifically, in the provinces of New Spain, placed missionaries in a precarious space where their liminality was tested. Franciscan martyr portraits augmented such turmoil by heroizing members of the order whose commitment resulted in the glory of martyrdom, thus fulfilling the ultimate goal of sacrifice. In other words, a novice accepting the illustrated martyr's destiny as part of his vocation as a future missionary signaled his acceptance of Franciscan liminality.

Turner's fascination with the Franciscans resided in their progression from an archetypal community, initially renouncing all material and structural possessions, to an expansive and powerful society present around the world.[7] As Turner notes, Francis compelled friars to leave the cloister and inhabit the "interstices" of the social structures of their time. They functioned independently from political structures; consequently they always occupied a liminal state: they were a community deprived of secular power, for which they compensated with sacred power. To this end, Turner highlighted the Franciscan espousal of the poverty and nakedness of Christ — a christic mode that aimed to place special importance on the process that separated communities like the Franciscans from the authority structures of their time.[8] Just as social

7 Carl F. Starkloff, "Church as Structure and Communitas: Victor Turner and Communitas," *Theological Studies* 54, no. 4 (1997): 653.

8 Turner, *Ritual Process*, 146. In fact, in both the rules of 1221 and 1223 Francis emphasized the poverty of his brothers by declaring that they were forbidden to take money and property. In chapter two of the *Little Flowers of St. Francis* (c. 1390), Francis is said to have praised Bernard, often consider the first follower of Francis, by addressing his commitment to poverty: "Bernard likewise received from God many graces he was ravished in contemplation, and Francis said he was worthy of all reverence, and that he had founded the Order, because he was the first who had abandoned the world, giving all he possessed to the poor of Christ, keeping back nothing for himself; and practicing evangelical poverty, placing himself naked in the arms of the Crucified, whom may we all bless eternally. Amen." Roger Hudleston, *The Little Flowers of St. Francis of Assisi: In the First English Translation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1990). It is important to note that the vernacular concept of liminality also helps frame the experiences and goals of Franciscan missionary training for contemporary Franciscans. For example, Charlie Martinez (*Oro Fratrum Minorum*) mentions that "the preferred mode of life is the stability that allows me to live life with some degree of predictability and security. But I need a bit of that liminal life, on the threshold, once again. St. Francis certainly lived that way, well aware that in the life of Christ there were very few comfort zones. This could well explain why the followers of Francis (and no

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structures vary over time, constant growth and transformation dominates any religious order that locates value in the belief that it exists in the margins of the societies it seeks to transform.[9] Therefore, as the order expanded alongside the Spanish empire throughout the Americas, its members became "decreasingly liminal as they enter[ed] into manifold relations with the environing economic and political milieus."[10] The presence of martyr portraits during the novices' period of monastic seclusion and theological formation, which enabled their ultimate liminality, aimed to veil this structural growth through the visualization of potential martyrdom.

In general, for religious ascetic societies, the liminal process — the means though which one comes to occupy a perpetual transitory state — is achieved through withdrawal from social action. Such withdrawal into monastic seclusion potentially helps one to scrutinize the central values of the culture in which it occurs.[11] In the case of the Novohispanic followers of Francis of Assisi, the idea was to re-evaluate their individuality as members of a mendicant order within the colonial hegemonic hierarchy from which they withdrew. Hagiographic martyr portraits aided in this process in many ways by reminding the novices of their status as members of a religious and political enterprise, in other words, reminding them of their Franciscan and colonial liminality. The images are thus ontological exercises in humility, piety, and voluntary death by savages, with the concealed goal of maintaining the hierarchies of a colonial structure.

Beyond the practice of monastic seclusion, the ostensible and perpetual liminality of Franciscans resides in their position at the threshold of society, situated between upholding Francis's ascetic doctrines and navigating the corruptions of everyday life. This liminality is a desirable state because it enables one to imitate the exemplary life of Christ amongst his congregation. In preparation for this life, the Franciscan novice underwent a period of monastic formation wherein he was secluded from society with the goal of re-emerging back to civilization with a new and higher spiritual status, ready to permanently occupy a Franciscan liminal space. The didactic nature of Franciscan visual culture helped to generally reinforce the ideas inherent in Franciscan liminality,

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doubt the disciples of Jesus) had to be adventurous people who left their routine and predictable and secure lives and lived that liminal existence, always on the threshold of something new." "Reflection: Called to life 'on the edge,'" *US. Franciscans Racine Newsletter: A Thorough Report of the Work of the Interprovincial Meeting, August 2014*. <http://www.franciscan-friars.org/Plan/USfranciscans_Racine_Newsletter_2014.pdf>.

9 Turner and Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*, 249.

10 Ibid., 4.

11 Turner, *Ritual Process*, 167.

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so central to the order, for all members. In Europe, as in New Spain, the order's monasteries, churches, and colleges were consistently decorated with paintings, sculptures, and frescos that demonstrate the origins of their history, and included images of the life of Francis and portraits of exemplary members of the Church.

In New Spain, the dual needs of colonization and evangelization complicated Franciscan liminality as it was practiced and perceived in Europe, taking on a distinctly Novohispanic form in this new context. Franciscans arrived into Tenochtitlan with Hernán Cortés in 1519 and were the first missionary order established in New Spain in 1524. Similarly, Juan de Oñate y Salazar's expeditions into the American southwest during the 1590s and the first decade of the 1600s, were supported by the spiritual guidance of Franciscans, who ultimately established a mendicant monopoly along the Rio Grande. In these new contexts, members of the order existed in a constant state of contradiction. Franciscans sought divine transformation in the model of Francis's exemplary life while also acting as auxiliaries to Spanish colonial powers, which for three hundred years controlled most of the American continents. Franciscans established their control within New Spain as a key instrument in the service of the Crown, and by doing so, changed the Franciscan liminality that had characterized the order since its origins.[12] For instance, they no longer were able to remain independent of political structures — one of the hallmarks of their liminality that Turner described. Within a few decades after Franciscans first arrived in Mexico, Spanish ideas that combined a strict observance of monastic life, a commitment to ascetic practices, and the vow of poverty based on Francis's Rule and testament were vanishing.[13] The extension of the order in New Spain

12 Given that Francis of Assisi never fully defined poverty in his writings, the order and the church debated the nature of this virtue for centuries. Despite this ambiguity, the order's structural growth in Europe was reflected in their academic presence in universities. Also, by the end of the sixteenth century, three Franciscan popes had ascended to power. However, the intimate relationship they developed with the colonial enterprise of Spain is unparalleled in the history of the order. Hervaeus Natalis and John D. Jones, *The Poverty of Christ and the Apostles* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1999): 2.

13 It is important to note that Franciscans believed in a millennial kingdom prophesied by the medieval Benedictine abbot, Joachim of Fiore (d. 1202). Fiore believed that humanity's apocalyptic last age was to be inaugurated by a new Christ-like figure, who would lead a new monastic order. Medieval Franciscans interpreted the life of Francis as the Joachimite new-Christ type. As a corresponding burden, the brothers of his order were to endure all the pains and tribulations of Christ himself. In Spain, this belief resurfaced under the unifying reign of Ferdinand II of Aragón (king of Aragón [1479–1516], king of Castile and León [as Ferdinand V, 1474–1504], king of Sicily [1468–1516], and king of Naples

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over vast amounts of territory, the continual funding of Franciscan missionary endeavors by the Crown, and the history of sixteenth-century conquest and spiritual conversion of Natives disrupted their fundamental values and vows of poverty, which were central to their ideal state of liminality.

Eighteenth-century Franciscans acknowledged the success of the sixteenth-century missionary program, but were also aware of their own failures when it came to imparting religious doctrines to Amerindians.[14] Soon after the missionary "Golden Age" (the second and third quarter of the sixteenth century), the enthusiasm for the first generation of Novohispanic Franciscans was replaced by a period of bureaucratic routine and disillusion. The order also faced constant Native resistance as a result of increasing demands for labor.[15] Consequently, the seventeenth century is characterized by a disappearing fervor and a decrease in missionary practice. By the eighteenth century, the introduction of the College of Propaganda Fide to Mexico helped to combat these challenges and renew interest in the expansion of the order to more remote areas of the empire like New Mexico.[16] The production of hagiographic martyr portraits thus coincided with a period that sought to re-establish a missionary enterprise under the rubric of a stricter, more fervid, and more violent path to personal virtue. In part, these paintings are manifestations of a revival of these "lost" theological desires.

Turner's observations on monastic poverty thus apply differently to the missionaries and novices who performed their Franciscan liminality on the

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[1504–16]) and Isabella I of Castille (queen of Castile and León [1474–1504]) and was subsequently transferred to the missionary endeavors of the Franciscans in the Americas. See John Leddy Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World.* 2nd ed. rev. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1970), 14. See also Francisco Morales, "New World Colonial Franciscan Mystical Practices," in *A New Companion to Hispanic Mysticism,* ed. Hilaire Kallendorf (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 74. Morales also mentions that "less than a century later, that is toward the 1590's, such ideals began to vanish under the influence of a developing colonial society. A simple and poor life could hardly coexist alongside the marked prosperity of New Spain." Morales, "Mexican Society and the Franciscan Order in a Period of Transition, 1749–1859," *The Americas* 54, no. 3 (1998): 326.

14 Jay T. Harrison, "Franciscan Missionary Theory and Practice in Eighteenth-Century New Spain: The Propaganda Fide Friars in the Texas Missions, 1690–1821" (PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 2010), 49.

15 Fernando Cervantes, "The Devils of Querétaro: Skepticism and Credulity in Late Seventeenth-Century Mexico," *Past & Present*, no. 130 (February 1991): 53.

16 While this essay concentrates on the impact of the College of Propaganda Fide in the provinces of New Spain, their sovereignty also stretched to remote areas in Guatemala, Costa Rica, and other parts of Central and South America.

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far boundaries of New Spain. A novice on the northern New Spanish frontier was fundamentally different from novices residing in the empire's administrative centers (such as Mexico City) because their location at the edges of the empire required preparation to perform their credo everyday among infidels, and often with payment in blood. Frontier missionaries most likely believed that they faced a more constant risk of death than Franciscans elsewhere. The Pueblo Revolution of 1680 gave rise to a generalized anxiety towards the internal provinces of New Spain. Native insurrection was a constant threat that fed the imaginations of Franciscans and Bourbon officials alike. Propaganda Fide authorities appropriated this fear as a tool for recruiting novices as missionaries.[17] The particular heroic presence of missionaries in the internal provinces of New Spain, despite the dangers of Native resistance, augmented both their Franciscan and colonial liminality.[18]

Within this colonial hegemonic hierarchy, hagiographic martyr portraits straddled the complex dynamics of these two liminalities.[19] These images reminded novices of their status as members of this religious order, and so Franciscan liminality. In life as in the portraits, these individuals embodied the thirteenth-century Franciscan goal of living in a liminal stage until they reach an "unchanging state of heaven," thereby following the example of Francis, who, like Christ, reached eternity stripped of all material belongings.[20] This idea was conveyed to all eighteenth-century Franciscans. Orator and Bishop Doctor Isidro Sariñana y Cuenca drives this point home in his *Funeral Oration*

17 Weber assures that by the last decades of the eighteenth century, there was a shortage of missionaries in New Spain. The portraits as recruitment tools is thus a feasible theory that increases their value as political propaganda. David J. Weber, *Bárbaros: Spaniards and Their Savages in the Age of Enlightenment* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2005): 117.

18 A comparative study between European and Novohispanic Franciscan monastic formation is a topic that needs to be explored. In my dissertation I analyze the unique characteristics of Franciscan presence in the internal provinces of New Spain, which could be compared and contrasted to the missionary endeavors in Europe and the rest of the world. Native insurrection was a constant source of anxiety to Spanish authorities, and by the eighteenth-century, such fears were constituted in the empire's visual culture. As such, the push for Franciscan presence despite the threats of Native uprising augmented the potential for death and martyrdom. Emmanuel Ortega, "Testimonies of Violence: Images of Franciscan Martyrs in the Provinces of New Spain" (PhD diss., University of New Mexico, 2017).

19 Turner, *Ritual Process*, 166.

20 Starkloff, "Church as Structure and Communitas," 643. Starkloff notes that Franciscans were to follow "the poor and naked Christ … [and] always be in a state of temporal passage until they entered the unchanging state of heaven. And this was the condition, quite literally, in which Francis died." Ibid., 654.

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over the Twenty-one Franciscan Missionaries Killed by the Pueblo Indians, delivered in 1681 inside Mexico City's Cathedral, when he reiterated St. Francis's philosophy by declaring that "If we have the necessary means, it is not for ourselves, for with us to hold property is an execrable offense."[21]

On the other hand, Novohispanic Franciscans' colonial liminality is graphically referenced in several ways. The portraits' violent martyrological subject matter helped to erase the long history of the order's complicity with the Crown: they reconcile the irreconcilable. Despite actively participating in politicized missionary activities that required direct engagement with many of the very aspects of the social and political world that they were tasked to renounce, eighteenth-century Franciscans wanted to prove they were not simply handmaidens to colonization.[22] However, throughout the seventeenth century, Franciscans in New Mexico remained at the forefront of the missions' administration by securing funding from the Crown through the conversion of hundreds of Natives and the promise of locating mineral deposits throughout the territory.[23] Historian John L. Kessell discusses the case of Luis de Rosas (Governor of New Mexico, 1637–1641), who was in conflict with the Franciscans over land profits, and accused the missions of being a financial enterprise run by friars at the expense of the Pueblo Natives.[24] The iconography of the portraits purposefully strays away from any internal conflict unrelated to the hagiographic story to avoid betraying their credo.

Moreover, to geographically orient the missionaries' deaths specifically on the northern frontier, artists included environments that signaled the presumed wild nature of Pueblo Natives and their lands. For instance, the lush landscape observed in friar Arvide's portrait appears estranged and alien to its viewer, something between a "civilized" colony and the wilderness, highlighting the colonial liminal state in which the missionary met his death in the interstices of an expansive empire. Arvide is neither dead nor alive, but oscil-

21 Isidro Sariñana y Cuenca, *The Franciscan Martyrs of 1680 Funeral Oration Over the Twenty-one Franciscan Missionaries Killed by the Pueblo Indians, August 10, 1680* (Santa Fe: New Mexican Printing Company, 1906), 27.

22 Turner, *Ritual Process,* 153. Turner argues that the liminality of Franciscans perished with Francis's death because his successor, Brother Elias, was obligated to convert the growing religious group into a structured community. Turner notes that when it came to these growing mendicant communities, a reassessment of their central concept was necessary, given that "structureless *communitas* can bind and bond people together only momentarily."

23 John L. Kessell. *Pueblos, Spaniards, and the Kingdom of New Mexico* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008): 51–72.

24 Kessell, *Pueblos, Spaniards*, 71.

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lating between martyred glory and human suffering.[25] Franciscan compliance with a colonial expansionist agenda, one ultimately at odds with their monastic ideal, was masked through the perishing bodies of missionaries like Arvide. Furthermore, the brutality of the Pueblo Natives appears in these portraits as a valuable tool by which the friars achieved martyrdom. Beyond anchoring these portraits to the territory of New Mexico, the excessive brutality augmented the protagonist's Franciscan liminality and situated the Natives as barbarians, whose stereotypical rendition was a visual language with which novices must have been familiar. The displayed misery must have also reminded novices that, beyond attempting to live in *imitatio Christi* within the Spanish political enterprise, an ideal liminal status *could* be reached in the wild peripheries of the empire through martyrdom.[26] Thus, within these portraits, Pueblo Natives are critical iconographic inclusions that enable Franciscan friars to fulfill their ultimate prerogative of mimicking Christ's example, as I will discuss later.

The metonymic quality of the martyr portraits rests on the representation of the friars' tortured bodies as somatic testimonies to their faith and as sacrificial soldiers of the Spanish empire's evangelizing campaign to conquer territories and convert souls in the name of God and King. Thus, the hagiographic portraits visually document a contradictory life path that future Novohispanic Franciscan missionaries on the frontier were to imitate: become a holy and devout man that embraced a virtuous life divorced from worldly possessions, yet support the goals of Spanish colonization all while also trying to obtain martyrdom without reservation.

The Novice as Witness

With these two liminal polarities in mind, we can continue to deconstruct the different iconographic motifs and representational strategies within the

25 In the hagiographic martyr portraits, the contentment portrayed by figures such as Casañas and Arvide, despite the torture and pain inflicted upon their bodies, may have also recalled for the educated monastic viewer medieval authors such as Thomas Celano and Bonaventure who wrote about Francis's ambition to die while spreading his credo around the world. Bonaventure, in particular, highlighted the order's need for martyrdom and postulated a necessary connection between mission and persecution.

26 In his *Admonitions*, Francis advises his brothers to follow God the Shepherd in "trials and persecutions, in ignominy, hunger and thirst, in humiliations and temptations, and so on." Marion Alphonse Habig and John R. H. Moorman, *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis*, 3rd rev. ed. (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973), 81.

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portraits that helped to communicate these ideas. An important role played by these portraits was their ability to transform the beholder into a mystical witness. The Franciscan order intended novices to embrace martyrdom after witnessing the portraits. The willingness to die for their faith and in defense of the empire that upheld it depended in part upon the belief that the martyr's wounds were also Christ's. The term "martyr" is originally a Greek word utilized to signify legal witness. In Christian theology, witnessing became the signifier for the presence of the apostles that testify to the life and miracles of Christ. As stated in Acts 1, "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be witnesses in all Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth" (verse 8). The term came to signify witnessing Jesus Christ as the Son of God, who himself was considered a martyr through his Passion.[27]

Viewing the martyrs' sufferings in these portraits transformed Franciscan novices, their intended viewers, into historical or mystical witnesses while simultaneously activating the images as political propaganda and as calls to action in the lawless corners of New Spain.[28] The martyr's wounds or "stigmata" also helped to trigger deeper dogmatic connections in viewers. They represented emblems of the martyrs' corporeality, which, aided by the paintings' inscriptions and available hagiographies, encouraged novices to compare their own existence to the Franciscan history of martyrdom. Gazing upon the precise moment when martyrs received their wounds evoked Christ's own stigmata; the wounds of the Savior were recalled in the bloodied bodies of the fallen friars.[29]

Beyond the recognition that the martyr shared in Christ's pain, gazing upon these images also engendered a type of visual piety that could spiritually alter the viewer in a similar fashion to Francis's transformation after his vision of the seraph on the cross. According to his hagiographic tradition, Francis witnessed the pain of Christ in his vision of a crucified seraph from whom he received his own stigmatic wounds, imprinted on his body as a manifestation of God's love. Despite these empathetic markers of pain, however, Francis himself did

27 See John 18:37. See also Norman Scott Johnson, "Franciscan Passions: Missions to the Muslims, Desire for Martyrdom and Institutional Identity in the Later Middle Ages" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2010).

28 Mitchell B. Merback, *The Thief, the Cross, and the Wheel: Pain and the Spectacle of Punishment in Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 54.

29 For parallels in this volume, see Burdette, "Reparations for Christ Our Lord"; Weller, "Pain and Pathos"; Burdick, "A Stoning in the Andes."

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not suffer. This idea is echoed in Sariñana y Cuenca's *Franciscan Martyrs of 1680 Funeral Oration*: "love was the only impresser [of the stigmata], something of suffering was lacking in them which Christ suffered in his…."[30] He further expresses that "yet in the body of His Religion, in twenty-one sons, not only was the love of God, the impresser of His wounds from which He willed that he should suffer, but hatred was allowed to do its work…."[31] The violent deaths of Arvide, Casañas, and the twenty-one martyrs of the Pueblo Revolution were thus necessary models for missionaries trying to live out the Franciscan ideal: they provided what Francis himself could not. Novohispanic martyr portraits compensated for the lack of suffering their founder experienced when receiving the stigmata. The violence these men endured — a sufferance willed by God — enabled observers to understand their agony as the agony of Christ.

Hagiographic Texts as Sources for the Paintings

As we have seen, Franciscan novices were actively indoctrinated into the liminal ideals of their order. By following Francis's ascetic life and evangelical commitment, they were trained to accept the perils of the dangerous missionary life. Central to the education of novices and future missionaries was the cultivation of necessary skills to solidify the belief system of the faithful and to convert Native infidels in remote areas of the empire. The very training of an ascetic life in these pedagogic spaces was itself a type of constructed liminality.

To achieve salvation, a missionary required training involving historical and theological knowledge of the hagiographies of courageous Novohispanic martyrs — the same individuals on display in the portraits under discussion here. For example, the writings of seventeenth-century Franciscan chroniclers, including friar Gerónimo de Mendieta, friar Alonso de Benavides, Augustín de Vetancurt, friar Isidro Félix de Espinosa, and Isidro Sariñana y Cuenca, provided novices with printed narratives outlining the perils encountered by missionaries while attempting to convert the "barbarian" inhabitants of what is now New Mexico.[32] This type of hagiographic or martyrological literature dates

30 Sariñana y Cuenca, *Franciscan Martyrs*, 19.

31 Ibid.

32 Friar Gerónimo de Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana: obra escrita a fines del siglo XVI / por Fray Gerónimo de Mendieta; la pública por primera vez Joaquín García Icazbalceta* (Mexico City: Antigua Librería, 1870); Alonso de Benavides, *Benavides' Memorial of 1630* (Washington DC: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1954); Augustín de Vetancurt, *Teatro mexicano: Descripción breve de los sucesos ejemplares de la Nueva-España en el*

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back to the early Christian period and to the official Roman tribunal documents that describe the interrogations and sentences of the Christian church's proto-martyrs.[33] The proto-martyrs found in these early Christian hagiographies served as models for the stories of the Novohispanic writings and the visual language of their subsequent martyr portraits.[34]

In 1627, the recognition of martyrs culminated in New Spain with the beatification of the first American Franciscan saint, Felipe de Jesús, who had been crucified in Nagasaki in 1597 along with twenty-five other religious men; he ascended to sainthood without performing any miracles.[35] Significantly, the narratives surrounding his martyrdom, which abounded in all Novohispanic monasteries irrespective of order, emphasized the pain and suffering that accompanied his missionary commitment and religious zeal.[36] One of these Novohispanic hagiographies, friar Marcelo de Rivadeneyra's *Historia de las*

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nuevo mundo occidental de las indias (Madrid: J. Porrúa Turanzas, 1960); Félix de Espinosa, *Chronica apostolica*; Sariñana y Cuenca, *Franciscan Martyrs*.

33 It was not until the fourth century, with Eusebio Cesarea's recompilation of Roman documents, that we begin to see the foundations of the literary hagiographic traditions. Antonio Rubial García, *La santidad controvertida: hagiografía y conciencia criolla alrededor de los venerables no canonizados de Nueva España* (Mexico City: UNAM, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, 1999) 140–142. For more information on the declaration of a blessed person and the difference between the process of beatification and canonization, see Robert J. Barro, Rachel M. McCleary, and Alexander McQuoid, "The Economics of Sainthood (A Preliminary Investigation)," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Economics of Religion*, ed. Rachel M. McCleary (2012), DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195390049.001.0001, accessed July 28, 2016.

34 Friar Casañas's story, for instance, relates to St. Stephen Martyr, an early Christian martyr who was stoned to death c. 34. In fact, several Novohispanic Franciscan chroniclers narrate their hagiographies with references to the early Christian martyrs. Gerónimo de Mendieta graphically detailed the death of friar Juan de Calero (also known as the first Spanish Franciscan martyr in the Americas), who met his martyrdom in 1541 at the hands of the Caxcan Natives, and declared that his misfortunes were blessings, given the fact that he got to experience the pain of Saint Stephen Martyr (who was stoned to death), St. Apolonia (whose teeth were broken), and Thomas of Canterbury (who was beheaded). Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana*, 738, <http://cdigital.dgb.uanl.mx/la/1080012505/1080012505_143.pdf>.

35 Rubial García, *La santidad controvertida*, 140–42. In 1634 a new age of martyrs was born when Pope Urban VIII declared martyrdom a distinctive form of sanctity in which miracles were not necessary for a saint's beatification or declaration as a blessed person.

36 Copies of *Historia de las islas del archipielago Filipino y los reinos de la Gran China, Tartaria, Cochinchina, Malaca, Siam, Cambodge y Japon* by friar Marcelo de Rivadeneyra were present in most of the Franciscan archives I have consulted. Also, copies of *Chronicas de la apostolica Provincia de S. Gregorio de Religiosos Descalzos de N. S. P. S. Francisco en las Islas*

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islas del archipielago Filipino y los reinos de la Gran China … from 1601, served as an important source of pictorial models and textual information that many artists of martyr portraits adopted in the following two hundred years.[37]

Rivadeneyra's descriptions are essential to the study of Novohispanic martyrdom because his account is the only surviving testimonial of Felipe's martyrdom. Critically, his unique descriptions helped to establish norms for obtaining martyrdom in New Spain. The Franciscan chronicler friar Juan de Torquemada (c. 1562–1624) further developed these martyrological norms addressed by Rivadeneyra in *Monarquía Indiana* (first published in Spain in 1615).[38] Torquemada explained that there were three conditions necessary for obtaining martyrdom: the first was to receive torture and die as a consequence; the second required that the said martyr died for the love of Christ or in defense of his Word; and the final condition required that the martyr's death be voluntary.[39] In Colleges of Propaganda Fide, future missionaries debated this type of literature as part of their novitiate training.

In his *Bosquejo de la historia del Colegio de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe y sus misiones, año de 1788*, friar José Antonio Alcocer suggests that one of the principal justifications for Franciscan portrait galleries was for members of the order to construct their own historic memory, informed by the spiritual needs of their current liminal condition, much as the hagiographies published in the seventeenth century had done.[40] While hagiographic martyr portraits were privately displayed in monastic locations, they constitute a byproduct of these

Philipinas, China, Japon,… by Juan Francisco de San Antonio, published in 1738, can be found in many monastic archives throughout Mexico.

37 Elena Isabel Estrada de Gerlero, "Los protomártires del Japón en la hagiografía novohispana," in *Los pinceles de la nación: De la patria criolla a la nación mexicana, 1750–1860*, ed. Jaime Soler Frost (Mexico City: Banamex, 2000), 73.

38 Torquemada is mostly recognized for his role in the Novohispanic Inquisition. His redefinition of martyrdom, following Rivadeneyra's publication fourteen years before, is often overlooked.

39 Asunción Lavrin, "Dying for Christ: Martyrdom in New Spain," in *Religious Transformation in the Early Modern Americas,* ed. Stephanie L. Kirk and Sarah Rivett (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 132. Lavrin points out that Torquemada was inspired by the writings of Gerónimo de Mendieta from 1595.

40 Jiménez, "Imágenes y memoria," 294. The original text reads as follows: "Alcocer en su Bosquejo de la historia del Colegio de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe y sus misiones, hace patente que entre los franciscanos, las galerías de retratos, lejos de constituir únicamente evocaciones a personalidades determinadas, manifiestan ligas a un impulso más amplio … la construcción su memoria histórica." The reception and wider circulation of hagiographies is an important topic that has yet to be studied.

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chronicles and hagiographies. The portraits' meanings in Franciscan spaces were not only activated through a familiarity with Christian iconographies of redemptive pain, but also confirmed through the stories narrated in these accounts. Artists drew from historical events like those recounted in Félix de Espinosa's *Chronica* quoted above, who himself drew from letters and other official documents to construct his narrative of northern Native rebellions of the seventeenth century.

Most Franciscan martyr portraits pictorially relate to Rivadeneyra's discussion of Felipe de Jesús and meet Torquemada's requirements: all the martyrs die violently at the hand of "barbarians," fulfilling the first two requirements at the very least. Significantly, the martyr never resists his fate, instead expressing a willingness to die as a witness for Christ, but also, as I insist, in defense of the Bourbon territories. Sanabria's *Francisco Casañas de Jesus* best illustrates the martyrological ideas that Rivadeneyra and Torquemada developed, particularly because it seems to document how the missionary died. This Spanish-born missionary was sent to New Mexico in 1693 from the convento of Querétaro, Mexico. The details of his death are described in a letter to the Mexican Provincial Clemente de Ledesma, composed in Santa Fe on 21 July 1696, by friar Francisco de Vargas. The letter explained Casañas's death in the following manner:

> [the] Indians … caught him and killed him next to a cross that the said religious had set up in the cemetery; and on many occasions … I heard him say, that he had it so that they could crucify him on it, and although these wishes were not attained, he succeeded in expiring at the foot of the cross after he had been wounded many times, as they ended his life.[41]

The mid-eighteenth century portrait illustrates the Pueblo Natives' exact sequence of attack that Vargas's letter described more than a half a century prior.

41 José Manuel Espinosa, *The Pueblo Indian Revolt of 1696 and the Franciscan Missions in New Mexico: Letters of the Missionaries and Related Documents* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), 250. Espinosa's version, written in Spanish in 1746, states the following: "Muy de antemano estaba el P. Fr. Francisco previniendo de lo que podía suceder, y habiendo puesto una cruz de madera en medio de cementerio de la iglesia, es constante tradición, que al ponerla, les dijo a los de su pueblo que si algún día viniesen los enemigos a matarle, le habían de permitir el que fuese su muerte al pie de aquella cruz que colocaba." Ibid., 284.

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The painting's foreground features the first blow directed at Casañas, and in the background is the brutal stoning that ended his life.[42]

While Sanabria's painting borrows from earlier textual accounts of Casañas's martyrdom, it also presents an extension of the existing biographical records of the friar's life. Hagiographies based on the documented events of Casañas's martyrdom surfaced within decades after his death, and they amplified the violence that official letters and other documents, such as Francisco de Vargas's letter, mostly omitted. Novohispanic hagiographies and missionary chronicles placed greater emphasis on martyrdom episodes as a way to demonstrate Franciscans' fervor for their order's goals.[43] It also contributed to the conception of Franciscans as public servants to the Crown and the religious legacy of the viceroyalties.

Foregrounding Violence

As noted above, the initial reference materials for the production of Franciscan martyr portraits were the hagiographies and chronicles available to artists. Of the available letters, official documents, and sermons, artists selected the content that described more violent martyrdoms. For this reason, a deeper consideration of the histories recounted in these Novohispanic texts allows for a more comprehensive reading of the martyr images.

While the hagiographical historiography of New Spain borrows from its early Christian counterpart, it differs because of its colonial American context. The intense three hundred years of missionary programs and the sheer size of the territory opened up possibilities for religious authors to create unique stories that emphasized survival in the face of colonial enterprise. According to Asunción Lavrin, while early Christian proto-martyr stories in Europe recounted episodes that were performed in urban centers for all to witness, such as in Rome, in New Spain they "took place in small, sometimes makeshift churches in remote missions, out in the vast and empty landscape traveled on foot by the missionaries."[44] Moreover, Antonio Rubial García and María Teresa Suárez Molina explain that unlike their European counterparts, the martyr narratives of New Spain were so vivid and violent that they resembled medical forensic

42 The stoning likely reminded Franciscan viewers of the iconographic parallels between this missionary and the exemplary life of St. Stephen Proto-Martyr, who died in a similar fashion, stoned to death by infidels despite his charitable and devoted service to the poor.

43 Galindo, "Propaganda Fide," 21.

44 Lavrin, "Dying for Christ," 138.

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writings.[45] It is this intensity that originally attracted artists to create this type of distinctive violent iconography. For a poignant example, we can return to Isidro Félix de Espinosa's 1746 discussion of Casañas's death:

> when the Apache Indians, who are the cruelest of people … saw him all alone at the cemetery, [they] captured him and gave him to these wolves, butchers thirsty for the blood of Christians. When the time arrived [fray Francisco] quickened his step to hug the cross that he had placed in the cemetery, and after kneeling in front of the sacred wood, they discharged on his head a *macana* with such fury that they broke his skull, bathing his entire body with his own blood.[46]

Félix de Espinosa's hagiography of Casañas thus fulfills the conditions of Novohispanic martyrdom as explained by Torquemada some two centuries earlier.

The events and details that led to the violent death of the missionaries, including the expansionist Bourbon agenda and the turbulent relationship between missionaries, local governments, and Native groups, are largely omitted by these hagiographers. For instance, the events of Casañas's martyrdom actually occurred differently from Félix de Espinosa's gruesome account described above — or so other textual sources would have us believe. In several letters written a few months before the attack by Jemez Pueblo in 1696, Casañas and other missionaries expressed their concerns regarding the "evil intents" of the Pueblo Natives to New Mexico's Father Custodian, imploring him to supply military support.[47] By July, five missionaries, including Casañas, had perished at the hands of the locals. Only months later, the General Commissary to the

45 Antonio Rubial García and Maria Teresa Suárez Molina, "Mártires y predicadores: La conquista de las fronteras y su representación plástica," in *Los pinceles de la nación: de la patria criolla a la nación mexicana, 1750–1860,* ed. Jaime Soler Frost (Mexico City: Banamex, 2000), 57.

46 The original text reads as follows: "Estando allí ocultos los Indios Apaches, gente crueliſima, con quien se habían colgado los amotinados del Pueblo, y apenas lo vieron solo en le cementerio, lo entregaron a estos carniceros lobos, sedientos de sangre de Cristianos, y … ya llegada la hora, apresuró el paso para abrazarse con la cruz, que había puesto en el cementerio, y al hincarse delante aquel sagrado madero, le descargaron sobre la cabeza con una macana tan recio golpe, que le partieron el casco, y le bañaron todo el cuerpo con su misma sangre." Félix de Espinosa, *Chronica apostólica*, 285.

47 "I have made known to His Lordship the dangers that can result from the declarations that have been made by some of the indians of these pueblos." Espinosa, *The Pueblo Indian Revolt of 1696*, 184.

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missionaries of New Mexico addressed his surviving soldiers from the College of Guadalupe Zacatecas in a letter:

> With the blood of your five religious, with the shedding of this blood in the continuation of martyrs, the religion will be multiplied and extended throughout the entire world. And in that New Mexico, although the blood that was shed with constancy and valor by twenty-one of our brothers is not yet dry.... Put aside, my sons, the fear of those who can kill the body.[48]

The correspondence between New Mexican missionaries and Franciscan authorities in El Paso, Texas, and Zacatecas, prior, during, and after the 1696 revolt reveals an intricate story where the promise and fear of martyrdom justified all the procedures regarding the defense and safety of future martyrs. These letters did likely serve as some source materials for Félix de Espinosa's *Chronica*, yet he omitted many details in favor of a more violent approach to the narrative he detailed, possibly because the version of Casañas's death in the letters, including his request for military support, contradicts the Franciscan credo of voluntary martyrdom.

Artists like Sanabria chose to rely upon the hagiographic traditions recorded in the *chronicas* over the other written texts (such as letters and sermons) that could have served as source material for their martyr portraits. Their similar focus on the violence the martyrs endured suggests that artists consciously turned to these Novohispanic hagiographies as their primary source material for their paintings' general subject matter and iconographic details. Similarly, the minimal biographical descriptions placed at the foot of all martyr portraits were borrowed from published eighteenth-century chronicles rather than the many other sources available.[49] For example, Friar Francisco Casañas's biographical text at the bottom of the painting was most likely borrowed from Félix de Espinosa's *Chronica* and it reads as follows: "The venerable father Fray Francisco of Hhs N R P Appco and founder of the Collegio of Sta. Cruz de Querétaro to whom life was inhumanely taken away by Indians ... of New Mexico, when he was in charge of their conversion in the year 1691." Drawing

48 Ibid., 242.

49 Another example: Friar Francisco de Arvide's inscriptions were probably borrowed from Augustín de Vetancurt's *Teatro Mexicano* (1698) and it reads as follows: "Venerable father Fray Martín de Arvide, native of San Sebastian en la Cantabria [Northern Spain]. He professed in the convent of Mexico and as reward for his virtues he obtained the opportunity to give his life in a glorious martyrdom to the Redeemer in New Mexico on February of 1632."

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inspiration directly from these hagiographic texts permitted painters like Sanabria to partially erase the historical complexities of the New Mexico mission system, as recounted in the correspondence related to Casañas, in favor of emphasizing the martyr's colonial liminal experience.

A central feature of both the chronicas and portraits is the *voluntary* pain of the martyr. With the paintings, viewers were impressed with vivid images of violent spectacles that aimed to affect their psyches. Given the didactic role of the paintings inside a monastic setting and their roles as visual models of exemplary missionary activity, it is not difficult to imagine how an emotional reading of the violence enacted upon the martyrs confused or masked the propagandistic role of the portraits. Direct testimonials from missionaries on their path toward martyrdom were difficult to obtain. These portraits were to be read as *de facto* illustrated testimonials, as much a truth as the published chronicas.[50] The pain and sacrifice of the martyrs fed monastic spectators with fantasies of their own martyrdom. To this end, the misery dramatized in these portraits shifted attention away from, or at least helped to mask, the political expansionist agenda embedded in them and represented by the figure of the "indomitable native."

The Pueblo Native in the Martyr-Making Process

Presented as a necessary visual foil to the "civilizing" objectives of the Franciscans and the Bourbon empire, the Pueblo Native peoples depicted within martyr portraits helped to construct the idealized Franciscan martyr figure. They served an allegorical role that corresponded to a larger tradition of depictions showing non-Christian Natives apparent in coeval visual forms, such as within *casta* paintings (Fig. 7.5). Casta paintings were typically produced in the eighteenth century to illustrate families that, as a product of racial mixing in the Spanish colonies, generated mixed-blood children. They were commonly gathered in a series of sixteen panels that demonstrated a range of hierarchical racial types, with "uncivilized" indios roaming the wilderness representing the lowest rank of the constructed racial taxonomy.[51] These images of the "indomitable native" in his or her "natural" setting provided further justification for an aggressive colonization campaign against resistant north-

50 Lavrin, "Dying for Christ," 145.

51 For a thorough reading on casta paintings, see Magali Marie Carrera, *Imagining Identity in New Spain: Race, Lineage, and the Colonial Body in Portraiture and Casta Paintings* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003).

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ern tribes. Casta paintings, like most martyr portraits, present these barbarian indios as darker-skinned, with men dressed in simple loincloths and wearing feathered headdresses — the latter a common stereotyped motif to convey "Indianess."

FIGURE 7.5 *Miguel Cabrera*, Indios Gentiles, *1763. Oil on canvas.* COURTESY OF MUSEO DE AMÉRICA, MADRID.

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Besides drawing on the general stereotype of the Native as "uncivilized" and "wild," martyrdom scenes also include Native weaponry that symbolized a type of martyrological *arma Christi*, or the instruments that penetrated Christ's body during his Passion and death on the cross. In the case of Arvide's portrait, where there are no Natives represented, a machete substitutes for the barbarian presence, magnifying the role of Pueblo Natives as the necessary conductor of the martyrs' pain and misery (Fig. 7.3). Textual accounts often described indigenous weapons to comment upon and condemn the fury of the Pueblo Natives. For example, in his 1681 sermon for the twenty-one martyrs of the Pueblo Revolution, Sariñana y Cuenca connects indigenous armament to Psalm 11: "For look, the wicked bend the bow, they have fitted their arrow to the string, to shoot in the dark at the upright in heart" (verse 2). Arrows, bows, and quivers become stand-ins for heathen disdain of the Christian God, and functioned as signs connoting the perpetual pain and sacrifice of contemporary martyrs. Sariñana y Cuenca suggests that a quiver is a womb full of darts and a "symbol of dissimulation, in which treason is concealed…."[52] For Sariñana y Cuenca, arrows, which are prominent in the *Virgen de la Macana* painting (Fig. 7.4), were the embodiment of treason. Using a reference made by the prophet Jeremiah in Lamentations (3:12), he attributed the pain these arrows provoked in the martyrs to the will of God:

> I see that in this place Jeremiah uses the words "Quiver of God," "*pharetrae suare*," for those most mysterious Divine Judgments and secret designs from which God permitted that He should suffer, like arrows which pierced Him through, in all calamities, which in His persecution afflicted Him.[53]

Here suffering gains a new layer of meaning. In this telling homily, the will of God and the suffering of Jeremiah are directly linked to the pain presently inflicted by the arrows of the Pueblo Natives onto the Franciscan martyrs. The pain is thus twofold: it is the product of treachery yet fulfills the will of God. Effectively, there was a connection between the suffering of the martyrs of 1680 and God's plan, both crucial elements of the martyr-making process.[54]

52 Sariñana y Cuenca, *Franciscan Martyrs*, 12–13.

53 Ibid., 12. Lamentations 3:12 reads as follows: "he bent his bow and sent me as a mark for his arrow. He shot into my vitals the arrows of his quiver."

54 The arrow as a symbol of barbarism in chronicles of conquest was present throughout the Spanish colonial period. This is a topic that can be explored in the realms of literature, art history, anthropology and other disciplines. A good example of the arrow as a symbol of

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In other words, "barbarism" became a theological agent by which the pain of martyrdom was achieved. The inflicted agony operates as a required link to the suffering of Christ, and as a tool that combined both Pueblo Natives' barbarism and hatred with God's will. Novices' understanding of these theological connections would have transformed the martyr portraits into windows through which these future missionaries contemplated their own destinies and perhaps ignored the order's complicity with Bourbon colonization tactics.

Bourbon Policy Revisions

One cannot read these martyr portraits outside of the context of the economic and political legislations promulgated by the Bourbons, who over the course of the eighteenth century curtailed Franciscan authority over their indigenous subjects. The portraits' production in New Spain increased during the eighteenth century and so directly relates to their struggles for authority during this period. Among the most prominent administrative modifications at the core of the Bourbon Reforms was the shifting concentration of political power away from the mendicant communities and into the hands of the Crown, allowing the latter to take control over the socio-political and economic rights that the orders had gained over local indigenous populations, including the Pueblo peoples of New Mexico.[55] This was a marked departure from Habsburg (1516–1700) policy, which had favored the spiritual and political authority the Franciscans held over these communities.[56] Within this perilous milieu, the hagiographic martyr portraits became increasingly politicized: the Franciscans were beset not only by the Natives, but also by Spain's regents, existing in a liminal ethos between two existential threats.

New Mexico represented one of the last northern frontiers of the viceroyalty, and the Bourbon Reforms sought to bring the Pueblo missions under centralized supervision. Towards the beginning of the eighteenth century, New

barbarism and civilization is observed in Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca and Juan Francisco Maura, *Naufragios* (Madrid: Catedra, 1989 [1542]).

55 Ilona Katzew, "The Virgin of the Macana: Emblem of a Franciscan Predicament in New Spain," *CLAR* 12, no. 2 (2003): 189–191; David J. Weber, *Bárbaros: Spaniards and Their Savages in the Age of Enlightenment* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2005), 102–4. He indicates that "in contrast to the Hapsburgs who gave missionaries a privileged position on the frontiers of the empire, the Bourbons relied on professional officers … [and] sought to break the missionaries' monopoly over the lives, land, and labor of mission Indians."

56 Weber, *Bárbaros,* 102.

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Mexico was also one of the last territories where Franciscans enjoyed freedom from episcopal control. Nevertheless, Native resistance to Franciscans during the last decades of the seventeenth century, which culminated with the Pueblo Revolution of 1680, saw a destabilization that pushed the Crown to yield administrative control of New Mexico's missions to the episcopal Diocese of Durango in 1715, effectively transferring a great deal of power from the regular to the secular clergy.[57] Additionally, to develop the frontier, the Crown had professional officers survey and administer the ever-expanding borders of the Spanish territory. Crown officials' *visitas* (inspections) produced reports that confirmed the conflicts between Natives, Franciscans, their Diocese, and the various local governments. These reports cited a failed missionary enterprise in New Mexico, helping to justify and expedite the process of secularization of this important frontier. In 1767, following Viceroy Croix's order to expel the Jesuit order from New Spain, orders were delivered to secularize the missions of Santa Fe, Santa Cruz de la Cañada, Albuquerque, and El Paso.[58] All these tumultuous events increased the need for Franciscans to constantly prove their allegiance to the Crown, or better yet, their desire to aid in effective colonization and evangelization. The hagiographic martyr portraits, with their overt display of pious devotion and singular model of sacrifice after Christ, offered a type of visual concession to the Crown and its radical policy revisions. These displays of loyalty perhaps encouraged the Bourbons to continually subsidize the missions of New Mexico with economic and military support.[59] In sum, the portraits' iconography valorized the protagonists' double liminality by asserting the need for Franciscan intervention in New Mexico through their death

57 The Bishop of Durango was in charge of this Diocese, which was created in 1621 to promote missionary expansion and alleviate the duties that the Diocese of Guadalajara had in the northern territories. See Jim Norris, *After the Year Eighty: The Demise of Franciscan Power in Spanish New Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000), 69–82. It is important to note that in Central Mexico the *Provisorato de Indios y Chinos* (the provisory of indios and chinos) was a jurisdiction in charge of punishing Native idolatry. This authority was commanded by the archbishopric of Mexico. Nonetheless in New Mexico, and other northern regions of New Spain, the Franciscans remained, for the most part, in charge of the punitive actions against Indians.

58 The secularization of these missions occurred over several decades. By 1820, secular priests were in charge of the missions mentioned above. See David J. Weber, *The Mexican Frontier, 1821–1846: The American Southwest Under Mexico,* Histories of the American Frontier (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982), 57. Also see Lawrence Kinnaird and Lucia Kinnaird, "Secularization of Four New Mexican Missions," *New Mexico Historical Review* 54, no. 1 (1979): 35.

59 Weber, *Bárbaros*, 102.

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and sacrifice without overtly supporting the specific Bourbon policies that challenged the order's leadership on the frontier.

As much as the Bourbon Crown's administration sought to secularize and reduce Franciscan control over the northern frontier, it also recognized that the order played a role in maintaining Spanish power, accounting for the increasingly ambivalent role Franciscans occupied over the course of the eighteenth century. During this period, the Spanish government began to conceive of Franciscan presence in New Mexico as a defensive stronghold against the expansion of other European states, specifically the French, whose expeditions into the territories of Texas began in the 1680s and who were suspiciously trading arms with the Comanche, just north of New Mexico.[60] Jurisdiction over New Mexican missions was motivated as much by fear of other European colonialists as from attacks from resistant tribes.[61] Historians, including Rex Galindo and Jay T. Harrison, view the eighteenth-century Franciscan missionary presence in northern New Spain as an intricate yet essential part of the Bourbon dominance in New Mexico. The Crown needed the order's missionaries to help protect northern territories from foreign European invaders. In effect, the Franciscan presence in New Mexico during most of the eighteenth century offers a contradictory history because they acted as tools of conquest and evangelization, observing Native aggression and other European peoples encroaching upon Spanish territory, but were concurrently being denied some of the autonomy and control they had previously enjoyed. Given this complicated historical background, it is possible to read the martyr portraits as attempts by the Franciscans to resolve ideological contradictions that existed in their relationship to Bourbon colonization campaigns and the principles of liminality that were central to their missionary convictions.

The proliferation and popularity of Franciscan hagiographic martyr portraits was thus partly a response to the Bourbon Reforms. At the same time, the portraits' violent iconography explains their importance as Franciscan private devotional objects as well as visual responses to the shifting political landscape. The portraits aimed to reassure recruited Franciscans of the order's double liminality by inverting the violence of colonial expansion from the conquered to the conquerors. A careful analysis of the iconography of martyr portraits reveals how their role as visual propaganda nuanced Franciscan and colonial messages. Through the power of their spiritual message, these images

60 Luis Navarro García, *Don José De Gálvez y la comandancia general de las provincias internas del norte de Nueva España* (Sevilla: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1964), 104.

61 Weber, *Mexican Frontier*, 69.

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helped to recruit missionaries to protect and potentially sacrifice their lives at the edges of the contested empire, embracing the friars' evangelizing agenda in defiance of secularization. At the same time, they represent a visual tactic that demonstrated loyalty to the Crown even though the Bourbon Reforms sought to diminish their administrative authority over their own missions.[62]

Conclusion

In sum, hagiographic martyr portraits conveyed multivalent ideas. They presented the "martyr" as proof to the continuous and seemingly undying liminality of the Franciscan order; testator to the misery and dangers that lurk in the wilderness of the expanding empire; and witness of theological connection to Christ's pain and sacrifice. However, the violent history of their mission system, which included appropriation of indigenous territory, and their role in the defense of the Bourbon empire challenged the liminality reflected in Francis's writings. To this end, the portraits helped erase the political implications of the mission system by focusing the compositions on the bodily misery presented in the chronicas. These paintings also extend literary hagiographic narratives into the realm of artistic expression, placing the suffering of the martyr in the foreground of the composition. Ultimately, the violence embedded in these images brand the viewer as witness to the misery of mission life and the barbarian nature of its Native inhabitants, veiling Franciscan compliance with colonial expansion beneath a sentimental connection with the liminality and misery of the illustrated martyr.

From the time Cortés set foot in Veracruz, the Crown's colonial enterprise was dependent on the aid of Franciscans as spiritual leaders, which consequently contradicted their ideal state of Franciscan liminality or living on the fringes of society. Asserting the Novohispanic missionary enterprise as a constant negotiation between two liminal states helps us to recognize the relationship Franciscans developed between systems of colonial power, such as the Spanish Crown, and the visual proliferation of their religious credo in New Spain. Martyr portraits embodied the liminal goals of the brotherhood and constituted an important aspect of novices' monastic formation. The imperial language veiled in these images suggested the marginal status of the Pueblo Natives and their land in relation to the central colonial administration, thus

62 By secularization I refer to the gradual power shift that occurred in the mission system of New Spain throughout the eighteenth century. More specifically, I mean a change in the organization and control of the missions that was transferred to the secular arm of the Church.

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presenting a justification for Christian conversion. In the end, Franciscan ideals were presumably preserved and vindicated in the face of the politically motivated conquest of new territories, populations, and their resources.

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